US cardinals speak out against Iran war, mass deportations in 60 Minutes appearance

by Lauretta Brown - OSV News April 13, 2026

In a joint interview with CBS's Norah O'Donnell on "60 Minutes" April 12, 2026, Cardinals Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., Robert W. McElroy of Washingto, and Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, began by giving their impressions of the first U.S. pope, Pope Leo XIV. Credit: OSV News screenshot/ Facebook

(OSV News) — Three American cardinals voiced their concerns over the Iran war, mass deportations and more in an interview that aired April 12 on CBS's "60 Minutes."

In a joint interview with CBS's Norah O'Donnell, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of Washington and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark began by giving their impressions of the first U.S. pope, Pope Leo XIV.

"He's the pastor of the world," Cardinal Tobin told O'Donnell. "He's not a pundit. So the distinction is he's not going to pronounce on everything. But he's going to pronounce on what's important."

The segment highlighted Pope Leo's recent calls for peace, a rebuke of President Trump's threat to Iranian civilization as "truly unacceptable," and his warning that Jesus, "does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war."

Cardinal Robert McElroy, who in a March 9 interview outlined six conditions that must be met for a war to be just according to Church teaching, said that according to Catholic teaching the Iran war "is not a just war" as "the Catholic faith teaches us there are certain prerequisites for a just war.

"You can't go for a variety of different aims. You have to have a focused aim, which is to restore justice and restore peace. That's it," he said. "Iran has been the chief exporter of terror," O'Donnell noted, asking, "Is there no scenario in which preventing that can be a just war?"

"It's an abominable regime, and it should be removed," Cardinal McElroy replied. "But this is a war of choice that we went to, and I think it's embedded in a wider moment in the United States that's worrying, which is this: We're seeing before us the possibility of war after war after war."

Cardinal Cupich objected to the "gamification" of war with how the White House has portrayed the conflict on social media. The show played a clip of a social media post from the White House alternating images of bombings with movie clips.

"We're dehumanizing the victims of war by turning the suffering of people and the killing of children and our own soldiers into entertainment," he said, adding that to "splice together movie cuts with actual bombing and targeting of people for the purposes of entertainment is sickening. This is not who we are. We're better than this."

As the conversation moved to immigration, O'Donnell asked Cardinal Tobin about why he called Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) a "lawless organization."

"I didn't say that they were people without law," he replied. "But when people act in this way, when they have to hide their identities to terrify people, when they can actually violate other guarantees of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, well I think somebody's got to call that out, and I'm not the only one."

Cardinal McElroy, previously bishop of the diocese of San Diego, where there is a high number of border crossings, said that he felt the number of crossings was getting "out of control" under former President Biden. Saying that he did believe in strong borders, he added that the policy under Trump is "a roundup of people throughout the country. People who have been living good, strong lives, been here a long time, raised their children here, many of their children born here, and are citizens."

O'Donnell asked them what they would say to "people in the pews who say, 'I don't want to hear politics from my priest.'"

"I say fine," Cardinal Cupich replied, "I want to preach the Gospel. God wants us to promote peace in the world — because his desire is that we be one human family."

"What we're seeing as pastors is an enormous, profound level of human suffering, and that's what motivates us," Cardinal McElroy added.

O’Donnell noted that Pope Leo will spend July 4 in Lampedusa, an island in the Mediterranean Sea that serves as a primary European entry point for migrants, many coming from Libya and Tunisia. “It’s America’s 250th birthday,” she said. “Do you think the Holy Father is sending a message … with that visit?”

“He’s sending a message that his top priority right now is to be with those who are downcast and marginalized,” Cardinal Cupich answered.

O’Donnell asked Cardinal Tobin about the record number of people that entered the Catholic Church over Easter in his archdiocese. “Do you think that surge in interest and attendance has something to do with Pope Leo?” she asked.

“I do,” he said. “I’ve had the privilege of working closely with four popes, very different people in a lot of ways. But each one in some way was the right one for that moment in time. I believe that Pope Leo is the right man at this time.”